Davies Maintains Notions of God Should Be Outgrown

By CLAIRE PLUNGUIAN

Dr. Joseph I. Davies, grand master of speech and beautiful articulation on the Rice campus, proved Tuesday in his college lecture on “Evolution and Revelation” that the mind, human or otherwise, is all a figment of organization.

An Open Mind

Stressing that the scientist must keep an open mind, and remember that the religious toes he may be stepping on are an inherent part of our society and should be treated with consideration, he then proceeded to sketch briefly the development of animal life from very simple cells of living matter.

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Organization
He described a process of organization, growing ever more complex, as basic elements built up into cells. These cells organized into more complex groups capable of reproduction, and kept reorganizing, with a constant change of properties and behavior as the organization changed, until the supreme summit, Man, was reached.

The Human Animal
One gathered from the talk that Man is supreme not because he has been magically endowed by a higher source with a tendency to resemble God or a basically noble organization of cells, but because it is possible to trace out a progress in evolution of life which has reached its highest stage, at the moment, in the human animal.

Religion
All this, of course, raises the question of religion, and how much of religion's answers to the mystery of life and the question of why man seems to be the highest organism can be held true within the framework of this evolutionary theory. Dr. Davies stated that there have been attempts to reconcile the religious view of man's beginnings, that of a Divine creating force, with the cell-organization view, by saying that the evolutionary process itself was directed by God. But most biologists, he stated firmly, do not see the need for positing a God behind this process.

An Accident
Man, and indeed all life, came into existence by a fortuitous accident. Certain bits of protein just happened to have organized in certain fashions to produce man. Just as man has outgrown his need for a supernatural explanation of natural phenomena (earthquakes and floods, for instance), so he should outgrow his need for a supernatural explanation of creation and ethics.

Ethics
He discussed ethics at some length, showing that all of our concepts of "good and bad" are based on relative convenience to the society as a whole and rational judgment of past experience. Thus, man evolved by accident, although at this stage he can perhaps control his own development, and evaluates on practical bases of experience. So the need for even considering God is removed, and a promise of a better standard for the common replaces the old cookie of Paradise offered to good kiddies.